3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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MAYURBHANJ

152 832 youth who proposes a mating and is refused does not mind it seriously. It seems that another successful intrigue would cure the temporary disappointment. But should the boy who proposes, be in real love with the girl, he feels shocked and many such cases end in tragedies. One such concrete case was mentioned to us by some old Santals as having occurred at Jorku, Baripada, where a lad in love with
• [1962] a married girl asked her to leave the village. She having refused, the boy committed suicide by hang-
831 ing. We closely questioned educated Santals to find out experiences of a deeper character. But all that we gathered was that ties of the heart apparently very deep, slacken with time and life-long devotion to the lover or beloved, should the lovers be compelled to marry others, is rarely
831 588 to be found. An educated Santal told us a story of a love-affair between two prohibited clans viz. Ṭuḍus and Besras. He said that his cousin (a Ṭuḍu) married a Besra girl because he was in love, not minding the antagonism of the society. The lover declared that he would defy death for the sake of the girl. But the romance was shortlived. The girl did not live long. She died and the customary belief that such marriages are unlucky, had its triumph.

831 Whatever that may be, we consider it almost a reflection upon human nature that there are no

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586 her while she could be of service to them, but would return her
[606] to her husband after a lapse of two or three months. They settled down to normal married life after the mother-in-law had become aged and enfeebled by rheumatism. Sometimes a wife who suffers from continuous fever refuses to stay in her husband's home, and if there are other causes of discontent her refusal may become permanent, in which case her father has to return the bride price and she becomes free to marry elsewhere.

684 Although the standards of Santal morality allow for a wide variety of sexual behaviour, once those standards have been flouted society can be fiercely intolerant. In the spring of 1939 a daughter of the village priest at Barikul who was married to a "house son-in-law" was discovered in the act of having sexual intercourse with a young man of the same village in the adjoining forest. There was some delay in taking action, for the headman from the aggrieved husband's village was asked to attend the council. The elders meanwhile extorted a preliminary fine of ten rupees from the guilty man, at which the young men were enraged. One of them said: "When we are guilty of small faults you fine us five rupees; in future you should take only five annas from us." When the council met, the amount of the fine was raised to sixty rupees. This was raised within two hours by the man selling all the livestock that he possessed. Of this sum, five rupees was for the villagers of Barikul, five rupees for the fellow villagers of the aggrieved husband, and the balance was paid to the aggrieved husband to enable him to find another wife. He was also allowed to collect from the home certain things that he had earned while living there—a spade, an axe and the
[586] brass cooking utensils. Ordinarily when a home is broken up such
[587] things are divided between the husband and the wife. On the same evening a party of the villagers accompanied him to a neighbouring village and completed a marriage ceremony for him with a new wife. Most of the usual formalities were omitted, but a bride price was paid and the marriage sealed. The guilty man was required to take the wife into his own home, but when next day the villagers found that this had not been done they went to the priest's home, where they found the young woman lying on the floor seriously ill. In spite of her condition, they took her down to her paramour's home, only to be met by his irate wife and mother brandishing axes. She was taken back to her own home and the council was again summoned. The elders by
[762] now had become seriously alarmed by the possibility of violence, and were relieved rather than otherwise when word was brought

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that the girl had died. Evidence showed that she had that morning taken poison in the form of oleander seeds, which furnish an easy means of taking poison. Their efforts were now directed towards the necessity for deciding how to report her death. In every village there is a *chowkidar*, or village policeman, appointed by the government, one of his duties being to report births and deaths. The villagers solemnly debated with him whether they should report the truth and trust to the possibility of bribing the *daroga*, or police inspector, in order to escape further inquiry, but they decided in the end to suppress the truth and save trouble. The girl was buried deep in the forest without ceremony, and her death was later reported as being due to fever. The council then decided that they would inflict the traditional penalty for adultery on her paramour. This is twofold. Images of the two guilty persons are made and carried through the village; and, in addition, heavy stones are attached to the genitals of the man, who is then made to walk through the village. In this case he took the remedy into his own hands by summarily leaving the village, to which he did not return till the lapse of several months had served to cool the general indignation.